Elimination of Poverty and Hunger

1288. SHRI K.M. KHAN: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken fresh initiatives for re-orientation of India's food security system towards the elimination of poverty and hunger from the country;

(b) if so, the details of the steps already taken and proposed to be taken in this regard; and

(c) the details of the financial assistance provided to the States of Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan and Bihar during the last three years in these connections?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The need for further streamlining the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) with focus on better targetisation and increasing the allocation of foodgrains to families below Poverty Line (BPL) had been engaging the attention of Government for some time. Accordingly the following modifications with effect from 1.4.2000 have been effected in the TPDS for better targetising the food subsidy towards enhancing the food security for BPL families:—

(i) The quantity of foodgrains for BPL families under the TPDS has been doubled from the existing 10 Kg. per month per family to 20 kg. per month per family at 50% of the economic cost;

(ii) The allocation for Above Poverty Line (APL) families has been maintained at the same level as fixed at the time of introduction of TPDS in June, 1997 but the Central Issue Price (CIP) has been fixed at Economic Cost;

(iii) Additional quantities of wheat and rice over and above the normal monthly allocation, if demanded by the States/UTs are also considered subject to availability and at economic cost.

These measures have resulted in a transfer of subsidy from APL to BPL population to the extent of Rs. 2217 crores i.e. BPL subsidy in the earlier scheme was Rs. 5439 crores whereas in the modified scheme it is Rs. 7656

crores. Therefore, the subsidy is now going entirely in favour of BPL population, while in the earlier dispensation, there was subsidy for APL also. The revision in the prices alongwith doubling of foodgrains for BPL quota will effectively transfer about 41% more resources to the poor.

In addition, different Ministries/Departments implement various schemes aimed at poverty alleviation, generation of employment, nutrition and health care etc. which contribute to enhancement of food security in the country.

(c) For providing subsidised foodgrains under TPDS, Government of India does not release subsidy directly to the State Governments except under the decentralised procurement and distribution scheme to the States of U.P., M.P. and West Bengal. Subsidy released to the Food Corporation of India (FCI) during the last three years was as follows:—

(Rs. in crores)

Year	Amount
1997-98	7500.00*
1998-99	8700.00#
1999-2000	8856.71

*Includes Rs. 28 crores to Government of West Bengal under decentralised procurement.

#Includes Rs. 54 crores to Government of West Bengal under decentralised procurement.

Variation in the prices of *Essential Commodities*

1289. SHRI BRATIN SENGUPTA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND *PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION* be pleased to state:

(a) what was the variation in the prices of essential commodities during the last year in the open market; and

(b) what action Government have taken for controlling the prices of essential commodities during the last year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) The percentage variation in the Wholesale Price Index (WPI) numbers of selected essential commodities during the last one year as on 15.7.2000 are